

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 22 AUGUST 2007

FUNDING FOR EARLY YEARS PARTNER PROVIDERS

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet for (i) the payment per place for Partner Providers to deliver pre-school education and care and (ii) an inflationary increase for local authority day care.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Council currently has Service Level Agreements with 14 Partner Providers of pre-school education in the voluntary and independent sector.
- 2.2** In the academic year 2006/07 the payment to Partner Providers was £1,068 per fully loaded place, i.e. 5 sessions per week. Approval was given by Education Committee of 23 May 2006 to pay Partner Providers over 39 weeks. The calculation to support this extension resulted in a payment of fully loaded place of £1,477. Payment is paid pro rata depending on the sessions offered.
- 2.3** In addition to the payment per place Partner Providers also receive an allocation for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and resources.
- 2.4** Children in their pre-school year can access 5 x 2.5 hour sessions per week. Three year old children become eligible for a part time pre-school education funded place in the term after their third birthday.

3. ACADEMIC YEAR 2007/08

- 3.1** The Council has received guidance from the Scottish Executive for academic year 2007/08. This has set out the expectation that entitlement to pre-school education will increase from 412.5 hours to 475 hours. This level of provision has been available in East Ayrshire for a number of years. As set out in paragraph 2.2 the Council revised its arrangements for the payment to Partner Providers to reflect this, last academic session.
- 3.2** The recommended advisory level of payment per place to Partner Providers, as set out by the Scottish Executive is £1,550. As East Ayrshire currently provides payment over 39 weeks, this equates to £1,591. It is the expectation of the Scottish Executive that this increase in funding will support "*further investment in staff in partner provider settings*".

- 3.3** In recognition of the fact that some Local Authorities already deliver 38 week provision, the Scottish Executive has indicated that the resources made available to local authorities can be used to further invest in Early Education and Childcare to reflect the recommendations contained in *Investing in Children's Futures*.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The Scottish Executive has allocated an additional £330,000 to meet the additional costs of the increase in the payment per place for pre-school education.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** As of 1 April 2002, the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 placed a duty on local authorities to provide pre-school education in either local authority nurseries or with Partner Providers of pre-school education.
- 5.2** Service Level Agreements are in place with the Council's Partner Providers of pre-school education.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1** Service Level Agreements are in place for all Partner Providers which sets out contract compliance arrangements. The quality of service provided is externally monitored through the Care Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** Nil

8. COMMUNITY PLANNING

- 8.1** The provision of early education and childcare is consistent with community planning aspirations and objectives.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1** It is recommended that Members of Council:
- (i) approve the level of £1,591 per place for Partner Providers; and
 - (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

3 July 2007
KG/SR

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Service: Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer (Early Education and Childcare Services), Tel: (01563) 578125.

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